



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT

Site:	27 Dickinson Street	
Case:	HPC 2014.057	
Applicant Name:	Inman Square Development LLC	
Date of Application:	June 30, 2014	HPC received: August 1, 2014
Recommendation:	Not Significant	
Hearing Date:	September 16, 2014	

I. Historical Association

Architectural Description: The house is a gable-end side-hall plan Queen Anne. The majority of the building is covered by vinyl siding. The main entry has a metal door hood on the northern edge of the main façade. The ground floor has 2 windows to the left of the door. The second floor main façade has three windows with the northern most being shortened. The fire melted vinyl siding revealed decorative shingles in the gable with a central window. None of the windows retain any casings. . A shed dormer is located on the south side of the roof. The foundation is parged and painted. There is a rear kitchen ell.



27 Dickinson Street, September 2014

Historical Description: The house was constructed sometime between 1884 and 1895 per map research. The owner is shown to be Catherine E. Fredericksen or Frederickson who lived at 33 Dickenson Street as found in the 1895 City Directory. This indicates that the property was rental. The first known tenants (1903) are Mrs. Annie McNulty, widow of Daniel, and William F. Buckley, teamster. By 1910 Michael Colbert, city laborer and Edward A. Colbert, teamster are listed. The Colberts were also listed in 1915 with the addition of Patrick Colbert, rubber worker. In 1924, John Jennings, fruit, is found there. Beginning from before 1930 through at least 1965 Joseph L. Burke, salesman and his wife Mary E. can be found there with family members; Joseph L., Jr. clerk (1940); Mary F., clerk (1940); Arthur J., Coast Guard (1945) and packer (1950); and James A. Marine (1945) and shipper (1950). Other residents living in the house simultaneously

with the Burke family were Alice Taylor, housewife (1945); Earl Collins, US Navy (1955) and meat cutter (1965) and Marie J. Collins, telephone operator (1955) and housewife (1965). Mary E. Burke died in 1989. Marie Collins became the owner of the property in 1991. In 1993 she and Joyce McGuirk became joint owners. According to an article in the Somerville Patch about the fire that devastated the building in 2013, one of the owners had been a waitress at the original Legal Seafoods in Inman Square.

Architect: Unknown

Context/Evolution: The house is located in a residential area on the land of Alexander Dickinson who owned much of the platted properties on both sides of the street as seen in the 1884 Hopkins Atlas and the 1889 survey by W. A. Mason & Sons on the outskirts of Inman Square. The street was fully developed by 1895. Dickinson made 'Lustral Soap' as advertised in the 1869 City Directory.

No building permits were issued for this property before 1975 when M. Burke received a permit for vinyl siding. The house is noted on the record as a single family residence. During the early 1990s building permits were issued to J. McGuirk and M. Collins, for work on the interior. They added the dormer in 1992.

Summary: Constructed in c. 1890, the house is a simple Queen Anne. It retains much of its original massing and form with the exception of a dormer. The original siding can be seen in locations where the vinyl siding has melted and been removed. Little can be found about the tenancy of the house in the 1890s. Several changes of residents can be seen until 1930 when the Burke family became the owners followed by the ownership of the house by long-time resident Marie J. Collins in 1991.

Findings on Historical Association

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) **importantly associated with people, events or history** or (b) historically or architecturally significant (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B). Findings for (b) are at the end of the next section.*

(a) In accordance with the historic information obtained from *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlasses, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, such as *Somerville Past and Present*, Staff **do not** find 27 Dickinson Street to be importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth.

The subject building is not found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to the lack of particular association of any of the residents with various aspects of Somerville's history.

II. Historical and Architectural Significance

The findings for historical and/or architectural significance of a historic property address the period, style, method of building construction and association with a reputed architect or builder

of the subject property, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B).

The period of significance for 27 Dickinson Street begins c. 1890 as a Queen Anne house typical of its period and continues through the 20th century as a family home on a street with many such buildings.

Integrity

The National Park Service identifies historic integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance. A property should possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant; therefore, the following is an identification and evaluation of these qualities and alterations as they affect the ability of the subject property to convey significance.

- a. Location: The building has not been moved.
- b. Design: The design has been modified by the addition of vinyl siding. While the siding was applied over the clapboards and trim, the window casings were altered for the application of the siding. The windows have been removed. A dormer was added in 1992.
- c. Materials: The original decorative wood shingles are visible in the front gable which indicates that more of the original siding may remain beneath the vinyl.
- d. Alterations: The addition of vinyl siding, a dormer, parged foundation and the altered window, the missing windows, and door hood have been noted above as alterations.

Evaluation of Integrity: The building has lost its integrity due to the alterations noted above along with the extensive damage due to a fire in the fall of 2013. The building has no individual distinction but is part of the rhythm of the street. Most of the buildings are gable front 2 ½ story Queen Anne homes with vinyl or aluminum siding. There is one 3-decker in the neighborhood.

Findings for Historical and Architectural Significance

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) **historically or architecturally significant** (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B). Findings for (a) can be found at the end of the previous section.*

(b) In accordance with the *Finding on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, which assess the ability of the property to convey significance, Staff do not find 27 Dickinson Street historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is not found historically and architecturally significant due to its lack of integrity.

III. Recommendation

Recommendations are based upon an analysis by Historic Preservation Staff of the permit application and the required findings for the Demolition Review Ordinance, which requires archival and historical research, and an assessment of historical and architectural significance, conducted prior to the public meeting for a Determination of Significance. This report may be revised or updated with a new recommendation and/or findings based upon additional information provided to Staff or through further research.

For a Determination of Significance, the structure must be either (A) listed on the National Register or (B) at least 50 years old.

(A) The structure is NOT listed on or within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor is the structure the subject of a pending application for listing on the National Register.

OR

(B) The structure, circa 1890, is at least 50 years old.

AND

For a Determination of Significance under (B), the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) historically or architecturally significant.

(a) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlasses, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do not find 27 Dickinson Street importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth.**

OR

(b) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, the ability to convey significance, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do not find 27 Dickinson Street historically and architecturally significant.**

